

Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



Articles in Today's Clips Wednesday, January 30, 2008

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	2-11
Domestic Violence	12
Health Care	13-15
Food Assistance	16
Energy Assistance	17
News Release	18-21

*Important story at this spot

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **battlecreekenquirer.com**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Jan 30, 2008

Day-care provider will stand trial in infant's death

Trace Christenson

The Enquirer

A Springfield day-care provider has been ordered to stand trial for the murder of a 5-month-old child.

The case against Ruthann Jarvis, 48, was ordered Tuesday bound over to Calhoun County Circuit Court on charges of second-degree murder and second-degree child abuse. If convicted, she faces up to life in prison.

District Judge Marvin Ratner made the ruling after hearing testimony in December.

Jarvis is charged with the Sept. 26 death of Damien Lewis.

"This was a terrible situation for everyone involved," Ratner said before making his ruling. "If anyone had the power to turn back the clock, I know they would happily do so."

But Ratner said he found enough evidence that Jarvis gave the child an adult dose of the sleeping medication Ambien, causing the child's death.

In a statement to police, Jarvis said she administered the pill because the baby was teething and not sleeping.

In his finding, Ratner said, "The defendant provided an Ambien pill because the child was crying and teething and her intent was to quiet the child. But the pill was meant for an adult and had a fatal effect on the child and caused the death of the child."

Prosecutor John Hallacy had asked after the testimony in the case that the charges be increased to open murder and first-degree child abuse.

But Ratner, after asking for written briefs from Hallacy and defense attorney Ronald Pichlik, ruled against the prosecution.

The judge cited a statement from Jarvis to police when she said, "I did not mean to harm little Damien," but gave him the pill "because I did not have anything else. I feel I should let someone kill me. I hope God will forgive me."

Ratner said he did not find evidence Jarvis had any intent to kill or harm the child or the scientific knowledge the Ambien might kill.

"She might have been reckless, but it was not premeditated and she did not have the intent to kill."

After the hearing, Hallacy said he is considering an appeal in the case.

"We believe there is an argument for open murder," he said. "We will be taking a look at the judge's ruling and the evidence."

Trace Christenson can be reached at 966-0685 or tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com.



[Click here to return to the Kansan](#)

Sex assault suspect faces trial over parental rights

Berkley father accused of sexually assaulting his adopted daughter

By Michael P. McConnell
Daily Tribune Staff Writer

BERKLEY -- A Berkley man accused of sexually assaulting a foster child he adopted and fathering a child with her faces a separate trial next month.

At that proceeding, authorities will seek to terminate his parental rights with all his children.

Gearald D. Snapp, 43, is jailed on a \$1.5 million cash bond in the sexual assault case.

Prosecutors say Snapp adopted the girl, who is now an adult, then sexually assaulted and impregnated her. The sexual assaults happened over a three-year period several years ago, according to prosecutors.

The woman has a different last name than the suspect.

Snapp faces multiple counts of criminal sexual assault in Berkley 45A District Court. A preliminary examination in the criminal case was delayed Tuesday until 8:30 a.m. Feb. 12.

Defense attorney Mitch Ribitwer said Tuesday that his office is negotiating with prosecutors on a plea agreement.

"We're currently engaged in trying to reach a settlement short of going to trial," Ribitwer said. "I think avoiding a trial would be to the benefit of all the parties involved."

Snapp and his wife have two biological children and an adopted child, all minors.

Those children have all been removed from the house where the Snapps lived.

Authorities are seeking to revoke Snapp's parental rights with those children as well as with the child he fathered with his adopted daughter, who first entered his home as a foster child, according to prosecutors.

A trial on the parental rights issue is set for 8:30 a.m. Feb. 19 before Oakland County Circuit Judge Martha Anderson.

Snapp worked 17 years for the Michigan Department of Human Services, an agency which handles cases involving sexually and physically abused children.

The suspect worked in the department's Oakland County office in Pontiac and was suspended without pay pending the outcome of the case against him.

Contact Michael P. McConnell at mike.mcconnell@dailytribune.com or at (248) 571-2571.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.dailytribune.com/stories/013008/loc_n3001.shtml

Oakland County

Judge allows autistic girl's testimony

January 30, 2008

BY L.L. BRASIER and JOHN WISELY

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

The prosecution's case against a West Bloomfield couple accused of abusing their severely autistic daughter continued to crumble Tuesday, when the prosecution's expert witness said the child could not be relied upon for accurate testimony.

Still, Bloomfield Hills District Judge Marc Barron allowed the 14-year-old girl's testimony, saying he would rule on her competency at a preliminary examination next month.

Advertisement

Defense attorneys wanted the girl's testimony excluded.

The judge's ruling came after the girl failed to answer correctly questions such as whether she was a boy or a girl.

The girl, who cannot speak, uses a controversial method known as facilitated communication, in which an aide helps a student type words into a keyboard. Investigators said the girl used the method to accuse her father of raping her for years and her mother of doing nothing to stop it.

Two other experts who testified said every scientific study of facilitated communication concluded that the aide is the author of the messages. Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Andrea Dean argued that the question wasn't whether the method was scientifically valid, but whether the girl was credible.

Barron agreed.

"The court finds nothing scientific about facilitated communication at all," Barron said.

The Free Press is not naming the couple to protect the girl's identity. The father remains at the Oakland County Jail; the mother is on a tether.

Contact **L.L. BRASIER** at 248-858-2262 or brasier@freepress.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080130/NEWS03/801300305>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



Wednesday, January 30, 2008

Bloomfield Twp.

Judge: Autistic teen may testify

If found competent, girl who alleges sexual abuse can use facilitator to answer questions in parents' trial.

Mike Martindale / The Detroit News

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP -- A 14-year-old autistic girl who has alleged that her father repeatedly sexually assaulted her will be permitted to testify with the help of a computer keyboard facilitator under certain conditions and if she is determined competent, a district judge ruled Tuesday.

Bloomfield 48th District Judge Marc Barron held two days of hearings that included two closed-court demonstrations of the girl's abilities and the bizarre revelation that a prosecution witness called defense attorneys with suggestions of what to ask her under cross-examination.

"In 25 years I've never seen a case like this " said Debra Tyner, attorney for the girl's mother, who is charged with second-degree child abuse for allegedly failing to act after the girl confided in her.

The girl's 52-year-old father is charged with three counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct.

The News is not identifying the parents to protect the ninth-grade special education student. Her allegations surfaced after the Thanksgiving holiday break, when she typed out on a computer to a teacher's aide at her Walled Lake school that her father had sexually assaulted her.

Central to the case against the parents is the controversial use of facilitator communication (FC) -- a person physically helping another who cannot speak by supporting their hands or arms for typing on a computer keyboard. Experts for the defense testified the practice is unreliable and not accepted as evidence in a court of law.

Barron ruled that facilitator communication is clearly not a science, but is a valid method of communication. Defense attorneys said that during two closed-court demonstrations the girl -- who one expert said had the intellectual capacity of a 3-year-old -- was unable to answer any of the simplest questions put to her, like the color of the judge's robe and whether she had a brother or sister. Tyner described the girl's typed answers as just letters and nonsensically spelled words that amounted to "gibberish."

Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Andrea Dean, who argued the girl would be traumatized if forced to see her parents, said the stress of the courtroom affected the girl.

"Normal adults without any special problems are intimidated and stressed-out in court," she said. "Should a girl with her problems be any different?"

You can reach Mike Martindale at (248) 647-7226 or mmartindale@detnews.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080130/METRO02/801300363>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright 2008 The Detroit News. All rights reserved.

MORNING SUN

Man says he began abusing 26 years ago

By SUSAN FIELD
Clare Managing Editor

A former Central Michigan University instructor and physician's assistant told police he began molesting children nearly 26 years ago.

Jurors in Alan Bruce Corbin's criminal sexual conduct trial intently watched the lengthy videotaped interview between Corbin and Isabella County Sheriff's Detective Sgt. Dan Denslow in Judge Mark Duthie's courtroom Tuesday.

Corbin, 46, is charged with five counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and five counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct for allegedly molesting a then 7-year-old Georgia girl who was in the care of her former foster mother in Isabella County last June.

On the video, Corbin, sometimes wiping tears from his eyes, told Denslow that he targeted his first victim when he was about to enter physician's assistant training after befriending the family of a friend who was attending theological school.

That was 1982, Corbin said on the videotape, adding that he was drawn to one of the friend's daughters.

"I found myself touching her in ways I should not have," Corbin said on the tape. "She was 6 at the time."

Corbin, who talked to Denslow in an interview room at the sheriff's department for about two hours June 21, went on to talk about other victims, telling Denslow each time that the children instigated the sexual contact.

"At first I was repulsed by it," Corbin said. "Then I pursued it."

While Corbin told Denslow he never had sex with any of the children, he described touching them and spoke of his reaction when one of the girls said she "didn't want to do it anymore."

"As sick as it sounds, I basically had relationships with those children, and I loved them," Corbin said on the tape. "I wouldn't do anything to hurt them physically."

It was later, Corbin said, that he realized he was hurting the children emotionally.

When talking about the now 8-year-old girl he is accused of molesting in Isabella County, Corbin said she was going to be "the child I was never going to molest."

Corbin told Denslow he met the girl in 2002 through her former foster parents, who were friends, and that he did not touch her until the summer of 2006.

Physical contact with the girl began with stomach rubs, Corbin told Denslow.

Like the other children before her, Corbin said, the girl "wanted more."

"That would have been my opportunity to exit, stage left," Corbin said on the videotape. "But I'm obviously not very good at that."

A tearful Corbin told Denslow that he thought he should be taken out of society.

Near the end of the interview, Denslow explained that he was concerned about Corbin's mental state and arrested him for first-degree criminal sexual conduct.

During later testimony, Denslow explained that he arrested Corbin, rather than take his report to Isabella County Prosecutor Larry Burdick and releasing him, because he feared Corbin would commit suicide and wanted him under observation in jail.

After Senior Assistant Prosecutor Risa Scully finished her case Tuesday afternoon, defense attorney Andrew Marks called Corbin's wife, Lendia "Sam" Corbin, to the witness stand.

Lendia Corbin testified that neither the girl from Georgia nor her own daughter, whom Corbin adopted and is also alleged to have molested, showed signs that they feared Corbin after the alleged sexual encounters took place.

She also testified that her husband was facing financial problems after closing his private physician's assistant practice and that she feared he would kill himself.

Closing arguments are expected this morning in Duthie's courtroom.

Corbin is also charged with once count of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and one count of second-degree criminal sexual conduct in Clare County; and three counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct in Mecosta County.

Those charges stemmed from Corbin's interview with Denslow, when he described incidents while living in the Remus and Farwell areas.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.themorningsun.com/stories/013008/loc_abusing.shtml

ClickOnDetroit.com

Boy Claims Man Accosted Him

POSTED: 2:17 pm EST January 29, 2008
UPDATED: 7:37 pm EST January 29, 2008

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich. -- Farmington Hills police are investigating an incident where a 14-year-old boy claims a man attempted to accost him.

The boy told police it happened on Eleven Mile Road, just west of Inkster Road as he was walking to Harrison High School around 8:30 a.m. after missing the bus.

The boy told police he was approached and offered a ride by a man in a silver sport utility vehicle or mini-van.

After he got into the vehicle, the driver asked him some personal questions about having a girlfriend and other questions of sexual nature. The man then asked the student to expose himself, police said.

The student got out of the vehicle and ran off and the vehicle drove off eastbound on Eleven Mile Road, police said.

The driver, described as a black male in his 30s, short and chubby, with short, unbrushed hair and dark complexion, never touched the boy, police said.

The boy told police the man spoke with some type of African accent.

The vehicle was described as a silver SUV or minivan with tinted rear windows and a wheelchair in the back.

"We are asking the community to keep its eyes open and call us with any information which may help us identify this suspect. This type of thing can happen anywhere," said Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer.

Anyone with information should call Farmington Hills police at 248-871-2610.

"Lets just remind kids that sexual predators are out there," said Dwyer.

Copyright 2008 by [ClickOnDetroit.com](http://www.clickondetroit.com). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

RELATED TO STORY



Video: Student Claims He Was Lured Into SUV



Wednesday, January 30, 2008

Help delayed in girl's shooting

911 tapes, police logs show 4 minutes passed before cruiser was sent to help mom, daughter who saved her.

Doug Guthrie / The Detroit News

DETROIT -- Dramatic recordings of two 911 emergency calls and police dispatches show police help was delayed the night 7-year-old Alexis Goggins saved her mother's life by throwing herself in the path of a gunman's rage.

The recordings, obtained by The Detroit News through the Freedom of Information Act, show a 4-minute gap between the first call for help and when a police officer was dispatched.

A city spokesman denied there was any real delay, but a review of transcripts shows that if an officer had been sent right away, he might have arrived minutes before -- instead of after -- the shooting.

"When the police got there, they performed magnificently," said Thomas Campbell, a lawyer appointed by a Wayne County Probate Court judge to manage donations that have poured in from the public for the girl's care. "If they had been given an opportunity to do it earlier, who knows?"

The recordings include two desperate calls for help that end in frustration for a woman trying to stall the would-be gunman who was holding Alexis Goggins and her mother, Selietha Parker, 30, at gunpoint shortly after midnight on Dec. 2, at a gas station on Seven Mile.

Calvin Tillie, 29, is accused of kidnapping the girl, her mother and a friend who had come that night to drive them to a warm home. The furnace at Parker's home stopped working. Tillie is set to undergo an examination for mental competency in 36th District Court on Feb. 14.

"What is taking so long?" Aisha Ford, 29, yelled before being told by the operator that police didn't have a car available to send. After Ford dropped the phone, a gas station attendant picked it up and tried to convey the urgency of the situation when the shooting began.

"Now, now he's shooting," Mohammad Alghazali said over the sounds of screaming in the background. "He shoot her right now. I hear the gun. Oh s---! He shoot the lady too."

After her mother was struck by two bullets, the girl hurled herself into the front seat between her mother and the gunman -- where she was shot six times at point-blank range.

Alexis and her mother survived, but at great cost. The girl lost her right eye and has undergone six surgeries to repair brain damage and reconstruct her shattered arm. She remains at Children's Hospital, but is no longer in life-threatening condition.

James Tate, spokesman for the police, said dispatchers and police handled the case as well as possible. The city has launched an internal investigation into the operator who took the second call for her "demeanor," Tate said.

"We are talking about minutes and decisions that are made on the fly," Tate said. "I know that minutes count, but there was no lag, no real delay."

A review of the recordings shows the second 911 operator was wrong about the availability of a police officer. One had been dispatched without her knowledge.

But there was a 3-minute gap between the time the first operator promised help was on the way and when a police dispatcher assigned an officer to check on "family trouble" with an armed man at the Fast Stop gas station on Seven Mile at Fenelon Street.

This information comes in the wake of a Detroit 911 emergency operator's Jan. 17 conviction for misdemeanor willful neglect of duty for failing to take action when a 5-year-old called for help for his dying mother.

Operator Sharon Nichols, 43, blamed faulty equipment for being unable to understand young Robert Turner

and mistakenly classifying his call as a prank. Officers dispatched to chastise the boy later found his mother, Sherill Turner, 46, dead from a heart attack.

Nichols faces up to a year in jail when sentenced in 36th District Court on March 11.

"Minutes count, and unfortunately, this kind of response has become part of the culture of the city's 911 system," said Ron Scott, spokesman for the Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality.

He said his office has for years taken hundreds of citizen complaints about 911 calls receiving late or no response.

"There aren't enough police officers to do the job, but more often than not, it's 911 operators making bad decisions that frustrate this community," Scott said. So far, the Alexis Goggins Hero Fund has received about \$32,000, Campbell said.

Donations may be made in care of Thomas Campbell at his law firm's address, Fausone & Bohn, Suite 103, 41820 Six Mile Road, Northville, MI 48618.

You can reach Doug Guthrie at (734) 462-2674 or dguthrie@detnews.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080130/METRO/801300369>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright 2008 The Detroit News. All rights reserved.



Man held after attack

Wednesday, January 30, 2008

HASTINGS -- After he woke her up to argue Monday night, a 30-year-old man allegedly fired up a chain saw and taunted a woman by swinging it at her abdomen. When she called a relative, he reportedly grabbed the cell phone, put it on the stove and turned the burners on. Hastings police, alerted by the relative, responded and arrested the man on charges of felonious assault, disconnecting an emergency phone call, malicious destruction of property and domestic assault. The suspect's name was not released. Police said the woman suffered a bite to her arm and was punched in the face. Police recovered the chain saw as well as the melted phone. Police say alcohol appeared to be a factor.

©2008 Grand Rapids Press

© 2008 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Doctor had right idea, but wrong approach

Wednesday, January 30, 2008

"His heart is in the right place."

Mary Metz spoke those words about Dr. Louis Pat May, and she should know. A nurse who worked with May for 20 years, Metz appreciated his commitment. Yet she left his practice because of concerns that he was giving out recycled prescriptions to patients who couldn't afford to buy them.

That's illegal, as state regulators who visited May last week told him rather pointedly.

So the 85-year-old Howell physician has stopped collecting and redistributing unused medication - part of what he called a "charity medical exchange."

What hasn't stopped is the need for affordable health care, and May's outreach highlights just how frustrated some medical professionals are about the situation.

May has been a longtime community member and advocate for improved health care. Howell City Council passed a resolution just last year renaming a local park in his honor, citing his decades of service to the community - service which included work at several nonprofits and help in establishing the former McPherson Hospital.

May started his medical exchange program because many of his patients couldn't afford the cost of an office visit, prescription drugs or medical supplies like oxygen tanks or walkers. He solicited donations from the community, and says he got a tremendous response.

But it's one thing to provide someone with used crutches, quite another to repackage leftover, highly regulated prescription drugs that someone donated after cleaning out his medicine cabinet.

Regulations are in place to ensure that drugs are stored properly and haven't passed the expiration date, among other things.

No doubt May's heart is in the right place, and that when he talks about doctoring "in the old days," he's justifiable in criticizing the complex health care bureaucracy that rules our nation. You needn't be 85 years old to know there must be a better way - if not in the past, then certainly, we would hope, in the future.

Skirting the law isn't the right path to that better way, obviously.

That's not to minimize May's message - that many people aren't getting the care they need because of out-of-control health care costs. It's a message that should be heard loud and clear, by both current state and federal lawmakers, and by candidates as we work our way toward the November presidential election. Health care reform must be a top priority - patients like the ones May is trying to treat deserve better.

©2008 Ann Arbor News

© 2008 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published January 30, 2008

LSJ BLOGS

State Journal stuns reader

A stunning overuse of the word "stun" and its variations in the State Journal has left Doug Pearson simply ... stunned.

Check out my blog at www.lsj.com/schneiderblog

Schneider: Donating prescription drugs in Mich. still illegal unless ...

John Schneider
Lansing State Journal

I must admit that for about half a second I considered spiking this column because there's a fair chance it will do more harm than good.

But the truth is the truth, and I can't ignore what I discovered.

The episode began with an e-mail from Sandra Plair of Lansing. After some tinkering with her cholesterol medicine, Plair explained, she ended up with about \$180 worth of prescription drugs she couldn't use.

The stuff was completely unopened. In fact, it was still in the mail when Plair's doctor wrote a prescription for a different medicine.

"I had already sent for a 90-day supply of the medication that my body was not appreciating," she wrote in an e-mail. "So now I have a supply of some very expensive mediation that can only be trashed."

Plair's mission was to get some ink for House Bill 4897, introduced by State Rep. Lisa Wojno, a Democrat from Warren, on June 12. It would establish a state depository for donated prescriptions, which could be donated to medically indigent people. The bill is in the House's Health Policy Committee.

Fair enough. But then the story took a twist.

Unexpected turn

When I called Plair to interview her, she was happy to tell me that she found a place to drop off her cholesterol drugs - at the Cristo Rey Community Center clinic.

Oh-oh. That's a violation of state law, is it not?

I phoned Cristo Rey and spoke to director John Roy Castillo, who confirmed that the clinic did, indeed, accept contributions of prescription medicine, and that, as far as he knew, it was perfectly legal. He even told me where, and when, people should take their unwanted drugs.

OK - maybe something had changed since 1997, when I last wrote about the fact that millions of dollars worth of good medicine is being dumped each year when people who need the drugs, but can't afford them, are going without.

Against the law

But James McCurtis, spokesman for the state Department of Community Health, confirmed that the transfer of prescription medicines is still against the law in Michigan. As state health officials see it, it's a safety issue.

"We understand people have good intentions," McCurtis said, "but recipients don't know where the drugs are coming from."

An exception to the law is the Cancer Drug Repository Program, which allows the donation of high-ticket single-dose cancer drugs under tightly controlled conditions.

A couple of hours after my first interview with Castillo on Tuesday, we spoke again. He said he had learned, following our first conversation, that Cristo Rey's medication-collection policy was a violation of state law.

"We will stop immediately," Castillo said. That's bad news, of course, for some people unlucky enough to be both sick and poor. However, Castillo said he'll begin lobbying for House Bill 4897.

"Maybe our legislators will do something to help the poor people," he said.

What do you think? Call John Schneider at 377-1175, send a fax to 377-1298 or e-mail jschneid@lsj.com.

Include your name, phone number, city, town or township.

Copyright 2008 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated August 2006)

[\[Back\]](#)



Woman gives her time to help feed the area's hungry

Wednesday, January 30, 2008

By Shannon Maynard

For the Citizen Patriot

For years Gail Jamieson had given money to the Salvation Army. She agreed with what the group stood for and what it does for the community.

"They follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. He said to feed the hungry and help the poor," the 54-year-old said. "And the money that goes to the Salvation Army goes where they say it's going to go."

In 2004, Jamieson found herself short on cash, so she decided to give her time. She has worked since then in a number of areas, including the food pantry and the Salvation Army's annual Toys for Tots toy collection and distribution.

Jamieson says her desire to give her time to the organization is simple.

"It's what they say, 'There for but the grace of God go I,'" she said. "I could be a poor person at any time."

Jamieson's willingness to fill in at the food bank has been especially appreciated by those who run it.

"(Gail) is the best thing for me or my partner when we're on vacation or sick. If we're gone for a week, she fills in so we're never behind," said Virginia Fetterman, the Salvation Army's director of social services. "She is very dependable, and whenever she commits to coming in, she's here."

For Jamieson, volunteering not only helps other people. It gives her the opportunity to improve herself. She said volunteering "allows me to practice my humility and compassion."

During her time with the Salvation Army, Jamieson has been surprised by the number of people who quietly serve behind the scenes.

"There are so many people who work in the background; people who give checks or work in the food pantry. They do it all year-round and are constantly there," she said.

In addition to volunteering for the Salvation Army, Jamieson became employed there about a year and a half ago. She works as the assistant to the property manager and cleans for the organization.

Jamieson also is a self-employed landlord.

©2008 Jackson Citizen Patriot

© 2008 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

State to probe power shut-off to woman, 90

Wednesday, January 30, 2008

BY SARITA CHOUREY

schourey@kalamazoogazette.com

388-8575

VICKSBURG -- The Michigan Public Service Commission launched a formal investigation Tuesday into whether a power company violated state rules when it shut off electricity to the home of a 90-year-old woman who died of hypothermia.

Phyllis Willett died Dec. 21, four days after a social worker found her and her 63-year-old daughter, who has a mental disability, wrapped in coats and blankets on the floor of Willett's house.

Indiana Michigan Power, a unit of American Electric Power, had discontinued Willett's electricity service three days earlier, on Dec. 13, for failure to pay past-due bills.

Among the details the Michigan Public Service Commission is seeking is whether Willett had notified the utility company that she was a senior citizen, which would have made her eligible for its Winter Protection Program, and immune to a power shut-off between Nov. 1 and March 31.

"We plan to be very open with them on the circumstances that led up to the disconnection," American Electric Power spokesman David Mayne said. "Aside from that, we've had meetings with social service organizations to help make sure that a situation like this doesn't happen again."

The company could be fined if the commission rules that it did not follow state regulations.

By Feb. 22, Indiana Michigan Power Co. must provide the state with details about the company's efforts to enroll senior-citizen customers for shutoff protection during the heating season. The company also must give the state information about any instances since Nov. 1 when it shut off service to customers who qualified for the Winter Protection Plan.

The company also is asked to address Willett's billing history, company efforts to contact her before the shut off and whether Willett tried to have her service restored. The state also wants the company to explain the circumstances of the shutoff and to provide a complete explanation of its own internal investigation into the incident.

Judy Palnau, a spokeswoman for the Public Service Commission, said the state regulations enter a gray area and that companies may determine their own methods of following the rules. Indiana Michigan Power's policy, which is on file with the state agency, requires its employees to make face-to-face contact at a house before shutting off power.

Contrary to previous indications, Palnau said Tuesday the state regulations don't require a company to make personal contact before conducting a shut-off.

When asked to clarify, she referred to the written regulation, which says the utility employee conducting a shut off "shall have in his or her possession a copy of the delinquent account of the customer and request any available verification that the outstanding claims have been satisfied or are currently in dispute. Unless the customer presents evidence that reasonably indicates that the claim has been satisfied or is currently in dispute, the employee may shut off service."

Michigan Department of Human Services News Release

Contact: Colleen Steinman or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

Responsible Fatherhood Awareness Month begins with sixth annual Fatherhood Conference

Jan. 30, 2008

DEARBORN – The sixth annual Fatherhood Conference here begins a month-long celebration of fathers and the role they play in their children's lives.

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm has proclaimed February 2008 as Responsible Fatherhood Awareness Month for the second year. Her proclamation will be read at the conference, held jointly by the Michigan Fatherhood Coalition and Michigan Head Start Coalition at the DoubleTree Hotel of Dearborn. The conference provides networking opportunities and workshops addressing the most current issues facing fathers and fatherhood professionals.

"Fathers are critical to helping children have better outcomes," said Duane Michael Wilson, who directs the Michigan Department of Human Services Proud Fathers-Proud Parents program. "While the importance of a mother's role in parenting goes without dispute, the role of the father is not always viewed as being vital. Males parent differently and we know children benefit as a result. There's a strong connection between the absence of father involvement and issues like juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, academic performance and poor social skills."

Through the Proud Fathers-Proud Parents program, DHS provides funds for community agencies to deliver programming about responsible male parenting and other services designed to promote healthy marriages and co-parenting efforts. The state-wide program has been allocated \$4.2 million for fiscal year 2008.

Proud Fathers provides 14 weeks of group-based instruction for fathers and other male caretakers of children who qualify for TANF services. Proud Parents offers ten weeks of instruction for married or unmarried couples. Both programs stress the importance of nurturing relationships between parents and children as well as family self-sufficiency.

The Fatherhood Conference will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 1. Cost is \$55 and includes lunch. To find out more about the conference or to register to attend, call (810)-591-7232 or send an email to info@michiganfatherhood.org

For more information about the Department of Human Services, go to www.michigan.gov/dhs

Posted by [Beth Reeber Valone](#) on Wed, Jan 30, 2008 at 11:15 AM

Conference kicks off Responsible Fatherhood Awareness Month

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm has proclaimed February 2008 as Responsible Fatherhood Awareness Month for the second year. To kick off the month, check out the sixth annual Fatherhood Conference on Friday at the DoubleTree Hotel of Dearborn. Hey dads, if you attend please come back to [MichDads](#) and share some of the things you learned and experienced.

Here's more on the conference and month's observance from a press release:

DEARBORN - The sixth annual Fatherhood Conference here begins a month-long celebration of fathers and the role they play in their children's lives.

The governor's proclamation will be read at the conference, held jointly by the Michigan Fatherhood Coalition and Michigan Head Start Coalition. The conference provides networking opportunities and workshops addressing the most current issues facing fathers and fatherhood professionals.

"Fathers are critical to helping children have better outcomes," said Duane Michael Wilson, who directs the Michigan Department of Human Services Proud Fathers-Proud Parents program. "While the importance of a mother's role in parenting goes without dispute, the role of the father is not always viewed as being vital. Males parent differently and we know children benefit as a result. There's a strong connection between the absence of father involvement and issues like juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, academic performance and poor social skills."

Through the Proud Fathers-Proud Parents program, DHS provides funds for community agencies to deliver programming about responsible male parenting and other services designed to promote healthy marriages and co-parenting efforts. The statewide program has been allocated \$4.2 million for fiscal year 2008.

Proud Fathers provides 14 weeks of group-based instruction for fathers and other male caretakers of children who qualify for TANF services. Proud Parents offers 10 weeks of instruction for married or unmarried couples.

Both programs stress the importance of nurturing relationships between parents and children as well as family self-sufficiency.

The Fatherhood Conference will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 1. Cost is \$55 and includes lunch. To find out more about the conference or to register to attend, call (810)-591-7232 or send an e-mail to info@michiganfatherhood.org.